

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

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November 30, 1999

TO: All County Welfare Directors
All County Administrative Officers
All County Medi-Cal Program Specialists/Liaisons
All County Public Health Directors
All County Mental Health Directors
All County MEDS Liaisons

Letter No.: 99-72

MEDI-CAL CONTINGENCY PLANS AND INSTRUCTIONS--YEAR 2000 (Y2K)

This letter is to inform counties as to the Department of Health Services' (DHS) contingency plans in the event of Y2K problems.

BACKGROUND

DHS mission-critical and department critical systems have been Y2K tested and placed back in production. The Federal Health Care Financing Administration's Independent Validation and Verification (IV&V) team has conducted an assessment of the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS), California Medicaid Management Information System, California Denti-Cal Medicaid Management, and the Healthy Family systems. The IV&V assessment determined that these systems present a "low" risk of potentially failing to maintain system functionality for determining Medicaid eligible beneficiaries, reimbursing providers' claims and other vital operations in the year 2000 (low is the best rating). DHS is confident that a statewide Y2K problem is unlikely and any problems that might occur would be localized and would affect relatively few individuals. Nevertheless, contingency planning demands that DHS be prepared for the occurrence of an unlikely Y2K event(s).

DIRECTOR'S ACTIONS IF A Y2K PROBLEM OCCURS

In the unlikely event of a prolonged failure of the systems, either statewide or regionally, used to verify Medi-Cal eligibility for providers, the Director of DHS will implement emergency procedures. In the event of implementation of these procedures, DHS will announce the implementation of this emergency process through various means of communication including local media. Implementation of these procedures will ensure provider payment for urgent care during this outage. Once the system is operational again, DHS will announce that normal procedures have been restored.

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Y2K COMMAND CENTER

The Medi-Cal program is establishing a Y2K Command Center to address Y2K problems. This will be referred to as the Medi-Cal Y2K Command Center. We are asking each county to be prepared to contact the command center by noon on January 2, 2000, in order to report Y2K problems or to advise us that county systems appear to be functioning properly. (Note: each county should be coordinating their Y2K efforts with the local Office of Emergency Services (OES). We need you to provide DHS with the information on designated individuals as shown below:

- * By December 17, 1999, submit the name of the contact individual(s), the backup for the contact individual, their phone numbers, their fax number, and e-mail addresses to:

Department of Health Services, Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch, 714 P Street, Room 1692
Sacramento, California 95814, Attention: Mr. Armando Martinez

The Medi-Cal Y2K Command Center can be contacted by phone at (916) 464-0368, fax to (916) 464-0855/464-2105, or by e-mail at "medi-cal_y2k@dhs.ca.gov". Y2K status will also be updated on the TAO system.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN CASE OF A Y2K PROBLEM

If a state Y2K problem occurs which results in MEDS being unavailable or providers being unable to access Medi-Cal eligibility by any means for a significant amount of time, and with the concurrence of the Medi-Cal Y2K Command Center, Medi-Cal program staff will take actions, as necessary, to inform all impacted parties, including the state OES. Should it be necessary, the Director will authorize the use of Emergency Regulations to ensure that Medi-Cal beneficiaries have access to urgent care by guaranteeing payments to providers who meet criteria described in the provider bulletin (enclosed).

DHS will be notifying counties via express mail, telephone, fax, and e-mail if a Y2K event is announced statewide or within a region.

The enclosed provider bulletin, which was released in mid-November 1999, describes the steps a provider must take in order to ensure that he/she is paid for urgent care services. One of the steps requires beneficiaries to present evidence of previous Medi-Cal eligibility by showing the provider, a Benefits Identification Card, a Health Care Plan card, a paper Medi-Cal identification card, an award letter from the Social Security

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Administration for a Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Program recipient, or a county produced Medi-Cal or CalWORKs approval Notice of Action. One of the items referenced above and the Y2K statement of eligibility will enable beneficiaries to obtain urgent care.

DHS will be issuing another provider bulletin in December 1999 to cover any remaining contingency plan matters. DHS will mail this provider bulletin as an attachment to another All County Welfare Directors Letter. Keep the bulletins for reference in case providers call the county on Y2K issues.

COUNTY ACTIONS IN THE EVENT OF A STATE OR COUNTY Y2K EVENT

If counties are unable to access their computer systems or connect to MEDS, counties should maintain their records on paper until such time as their records can be added to MEDS.

Those new beneficiaries/recipients whose records can not be added to MEDS and who do not have any other proof of Medi-Cal coverage as shown above, should be given a Medi-Cal or CalWORKs approval Notice of Action as beneficiaries needing urgent services will need to present a copy of this notice to their provider. Counties may add approval notice language to county letterhead (hand written or automated) for use in place of the Medi-Cal Notice of Action described above.

COUNTY REQUESTS FOR HARD COPIES OF MEDS

Some counties have requested hard copies of the MEDS files. Given the cost, the unlikelihood of a statewide problem and other technical considerations; DHS has decided not to provide these files.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Mr. Armando Martinez of my staff, at (916) 657-1487.

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
RICHARD BRANTINGHAM for
Angeline Mrva, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch

Enclosures